

Accepted by the Graduate Faculty, Indiana University, in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of Master of Liberal Studies.

THE AMISH NINE-PATCH QUILT:
THE CULTURE AND ART WITHIN

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DEDICATION

Accepted by the Graduate Faculty, Indiana University, in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Liberal Studies.

I dedicate this project to my paternal grandmother because without her love and patience, when as a young child I made my first attempts at sewing, this project would never have come into existence.

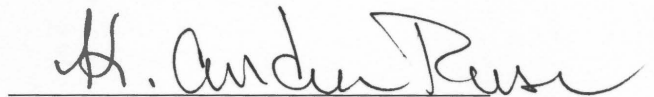
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I would like to thank the professors who were members of my committee, Dr. Rebecca Torstrick, Dr. Marsha Heck, and Dr. K. Andrea Rusnock, for their support and wisdom as I wrote my process paper and completed my quilt project. Without their assistance this project would never have been completed.

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INTRODUCTION

From the time I was a child I have enjoyed reading about other cultures, regardless of whether my readings took me to a Southern plantation, an Indian village, or an Amish community. During my childhood I was curious about our Amish neighbors and wondered why they did not drive cars or why they dressed differently. As I got old enough to explore on my own, Indiana Amish country was always high on my list of places to go. There was nothing better than driving a country road and discovering an auction at an Amish farm. At these auctions we could buy anything from lye soap to quilts to puppies.

When I was a young married woman my husband worked at a popcorn factory with several Amish men. Eventually, we became a taxi of sorts. We would take the young Amish men and their girlfriends or families back and forth between the Indiana communities of Nappanee and Shipshewana or Middlebury. In exchange for rides, we were kept well supplied with Amish-grown flowers, fresh produce, eggs, homemade noodles and cakes. Additionally, as we traveled the Amish back-roads and visited Amish farms, I was able to catch glimpses of Amish quilts.

Given my interest in the Amish and knowing that I wanted to create an artistic project, I decided on an Amish style quilt as my Master of Liberal Studies final creative project. There were many facets to this interdisciplinary project. I studied history as I read about the Amish and their reasons for coming to this country, their beginning settlements, their religious beliefs, and their lifestyle. One would not think that where an Amish person settled or her religious beliefs would have an effect on her quilt making. However, as we shall see, where an Amish woman lives, and even her particular church

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district, can influence all aspects of her life. When one sees Amish people, they may all look alike; however, as I read about their history, I realized there are many different branches of the Amish. These differences are even reflected in their quilts. Historically, quilt making was not a part of Amish women's culture. It was not until the 1850s and 1860s that quilts began to show up at all in Amish inventories; prior to that, they used woolen blankets. Even in this time period the appearance of quilts in households was rare (Granick 1989: 26). Had I not spent much time reading about Amish history and, more specifically, quilt history, I would have just assumed that quilt making was always practiced by Amish women.

I also incorporated anthropology and the study of culture in my project. I spent considerable time reading and studying about both Amish culture and Amish quilt culture in order to make a quilt that is representative of one to be found in an Indiana Amish community. Since Amish quilts can vary greatly from one area of the country to another, it was important both to study the history of Amish quilts and, unquestionably, to have a strong grasp of the cultural background and beliefs of different locales where the Amish people reside. To gain this knowledge, I read Amish quilt books, history books, works of fiction about the Amish, Amish biographies, and many books and articles on different aspects of Amish culture. All of my readings were pieces of a puzzle that, when put together, allowed me to have a much better grasp of the Amish as a whole group.

Making my quilt also drew upon basic math skills that I needed to use to figure out the quilt size, pattern sizes, and border sizes. Previously, as I made quilts, I never gave any thought to these skills. I simply took the math problems involved in quilt making with a grain of salt as something that everyone could do. However, I no longer

feel that this is the case. I have met many adults, throughout the years, who do not have even basic math competence. Without these most basic skills an individual probably could not make a quilt.

HISTORY

The Amish are a small and highly conservative segment of the religious movement known as the Anabaptists. The Anabaptists were considered to be a radical group because they practiced both adult baptism and rebaptism. To this group, baptism was only meaningful if it was done voluntarily by adults. The first group of Anabaptists migrated to the United States in the mid-1700s and a second wave arrived in the early 1800s (Niemeyer 1993; Nolt 1992; Granick 1986). Once the Amish arrived in North America, they followed the Mennonite settlers into an area of Pennsylvania known for farming. Since the early Amish settlers were farmers, this locale was considered an ideal place to settle.

According to a recent study conducted by Steven Scott of the Young Center for Anabaptist and Pietist Studies, there are over 231,000 Amish in the United States (http://www2.etown.edu/amishstudies/Population_Trends_2007_2008.asp). Although Amish communities can be found in many states, over seventy-five percent of the Amish reside in Pennsylvania, Ohio and Indiana (Kraybill 2001: 103). In spite of the fact that the Amish are surrounded by modern technology, such as electricity, which they do not use, the Amish have continued to thrive. The Amish population, according to Kraybill, is growing at the rate of four percent per year, and at that rate, will double by 2026 (Hurdle 2008).

The Gelassenheit (pronounced Ge-las-en-heit) is the cornerstone of Amish values. Translated, this word means yielding to a higher authority. The Amish follow their preachers and bishops in all parts of their life. The beliefs of obedience, humility and simplicity are found in every aspect of daily life within an Amish community (Niemeyer 1993:4; Bender 1989; Davis 2000; Haroff 2004; Igou 1999). Obedience to the will of God is the most important value. The Amish believe that submission to all higher authority creates an orderly community (Niemeyer 1993:4; Wittmer 1990).

The process of social ordering within each Amish community is found in the Ordnung (pronounced ott-ning), regulations that represent the consensus of the leaders and are approved by church members. The old regulations, made in special conferences, have been put down in writing; however, most rules in a given community are unwritten and are passed down from one generation to the next through oral traditions (Hostetler 1980:84-88). The Ordnung, by which the Amish live, regulates every aspect of their lives including gender roles, worship practices, dress codes, uses of technology, and relationships with the outside world. As the world around the Amish changes, the Ordnung can be changed or modified (Kraybill 2001:180).

Amish society is based on a very simple design, with three key parts. The first part of the design is the immediate family. It is not unusual for an Amish family to have five to ten children. In the majority of Amish communities approximately fifty percent of the population is under eighteen years of age (Niemeyer 1993:6). The second building block of Amish society is the extended family. The extended family includes grandparents, aunts, uncles, and cousins of the immediate family. Many extended families live within walking distance of each other, although some may live in the next

town or community. A young person living in an Amish community may have seventy-five or more first cousins and it is not unusual for a grandmother to have thirty or more grandchildren (Niemeyer 1993:6).

The church district is the hub of all Amish life and is the third part of the Amish design. A church district will number twenty-five to thirty-family families within a certain vicinity. With many extended families living in close proximity, it is not unusual for a church district to consist of several families who are all related. Each district has as its leader a bishop, two preachers, and a deacon. These individuals are chosen by church members and usually serve in one of these positions for life, working without pay. The bishop officiates at weddings, baptisms, funerals, and other official functions. He is in charge of determining all disciplinary action against people who violate the church Ordnung and occasionally will preach at a church service. The two preachers do the majority of the preaching in their home district, where services are held every other week. On off Sundays, when no church service is held in the home district, a preacher may preach as a visitor elsewhere. The preachers also help with the communion service held twice a year. The deacon assists with the worship service and helps any needy or elderly members in the district. Additionally, the deacon also has the daily responsibility of dealing with individuals who are not following Ordnung guidelines and making sure that any disciplinary actions needed are carried out. In many instances, the deacon reports to the bishop any issues that have arisen (Hostetler 1980:110).

Generally speaking, home decoration is not referred to in church Ordnung; however, occasionally mention of these items will appear and it is possible to extrapolate from what little is said to understand how the Ordnung might affect quilt making. For

example, the Discipline of 1865 for Holmes County, Ohio noted that “gaily colored, striped or flowered clothing made according to the fashion of the world...also it is improper to decorate the house with all sorts of unnecessary luxurious things” (H. Bender 1934:90-98 as quoted in Granick). Another Ordnung, written in the 1950s, states that “colors such as bright pink, bright red, orange and yellow are not allowed in the home” (Reed 1968: 746-776). Although these Ordnung do not specifically mention quilt making, the women in the districts where the Ordnung are in effect would be hesitant to use the mentioned colors or fabrics in their quilts. Progressive Amish groups, however, may use any color they want (Hawley 2005:104). Although the Ordnung might seem restrictive, they give every aspect of Amish life structure and discipline.

Certain values have also affected Amish quilt making. Humility used within Amish settlements goes hand in hand with obedience. To have humility means that one does not display pridefulness or arrogance. To “show off” or to try to gain attention for oneself is disrespectful to the running of an orderly community. The proud person puts her name on everything while a humble individual gives freely without seeking recognition (S. Bender 1989:77). Amish individuals also sought to demonstrate another value, simplicity, as an ideal in their lives. Simplicity in dress, household décor, architecture, and church services equals orderliness in Amish lives. Adornments for the self or the surrounding world reflect a show of pride that is not acceptable in Amish lives (Yoder 1940: 49; Stoltzfus 1994; Stevick 2006). The Amish thus choose to live their lives as simply as possible, without pridefulness. These values are reflected in the quilts that they make.

bars that can vary in width from a couple of inches to a foot or more (Herr 1997:38; Trifonoff 1989). In Lancaster County, these three patterns for quilt centers have in common wide borders. In most instances, the quilts have one wide border measuring ten to fifteen inches. Large corner blocks are also frequently seen in quilt borders made in Lancaster County (Granick 1989:78). The elaborate quilting found on these distinctive quilts is spectacular and is not found in other Amish communities (Milspaw 1997:383). Quilts in this area are usually square in shape rather than the rectangular shape found in other areas.

While the Amish in Pennsylvania have their distinctive designs, Amish quilters in Ohio and Indiana picked up patterns from their “English” (non-Amish) neighbors, thus quilters in the Midwest regions have much more variety in their quilt patterns (Bender 1989:113). Some of the most common patterns in both Indiana and Ohio are Nine-Patch, Roman Stripes, Ocean Waves, Monkey Wrench and Log Cabins. In most instances it is hard to distinguish between Amish quilts made in Indiana and Ohio (Pellman 1990:33). One pattern that emerged in Indiana and is not seen often in either Ohio or Pennsylvania is the Fan pattern. This pattern resembles an opened paper fan such as those popular with women prior to the advent of air conditioning. On many of these Fan quilts embroidery was stitched on the edges of the pieces (Granick 1989:124). It is unclear why this pattern emerged as a popular one among Indiana Amish quilters.

A common bond between Ohio and Indiana-made Amish quilts is the colors used. While Pennsylvania quilts used blues, purples and greens, or the colors from the “cool” part of the color wheel, Indiana and Ohio quilts included almost every color. Black, used in both Ohio and Indiana, is almost never seen in a Lancaster County quilt (Granick

1989:81). Although black was not popular until the years 1920-1940, since then it has become a widely used color for backgrounds in Ohio and Indiana (Granick 1989:113). White fabric was traditionally not used in Amish quilts; it was saved for funerals (Bender 1989:73).

As Amish women moved west, they spent more time working on the farms, thus, they had less time for elaborate handiwork. Additionally, life was less refined in Indiana than in Pennsylvania which led to less refinement in the quilts being made (Granick 1989:132). The actual quilting on Indiana and Ohio Amish quilts consists of many of the same patterns used on Pennsylvania quilts. However, quilts produced in Ohio and especially in Indiana show not as fine a quality of quilting stitches. In Indiana the stitches are fewer and larger and the quilting is also less elaborate.

Since the early 1970s there has been a change in Amish quilts that needs to be addressed. Before this time the Amish made quilts for their own personal use. The solid-colored quilts were found on their beds or given as gifts. However, by the 1970s many Amish women adjusted their quilt making so that they could derive an income from their craft. The price of farm land was becoming prohibitive for many young Amish couples, and, in many instances, federal regulations changed which made it very expensive to continue with large scale farming (Olshan 1991: 379). With the prohibitive cost of farm land and the new regulations cutting deeply into profits, many Amish families turned to cottage industries to earn a living. The majority of the businesses were located at the family farm or home. The types of items sold at these businesses included everything from baked goods and plants to handmade furniture and quilts (Olshan 1991:381). At the same time as many of these cottage industries were starting, another phenomenon was

occurring in Amish communities. Tourists began to flock into these areas. Thousands of tourists meant a good way for the Amish to earn extra income, since tourists wanted Amish goods. Many Amish women were shocked that outsiders would pay hundreds of dollars for a quilt, many of which were well worn (Herr 1997:39). Although many tourists were impressed with the workmanship of Amish made quilts, most of the visitors did not like the plain solid fabrics or patterns used by the Amish; thus, the Amish women were asked to make fancy quilts with printed fabrics (Safanda 1983: 75; Jefferson 1998).

Many women in Amish communities now make fancy quilts on commission where they set their own prices (Hawley 2005:111). In addition to working on commission, women can earn income from their quilting by working for a business. *Lolly's Fabrics and Quilts* in Shipshewana hires women as quilt makers. After speaking with a couple of their employees, I learned that all of their quilts are made by local Amish and Mennonite women who are paid on a piecework basis. This means that they are paid by the pieces they cut, the amount of sewing they do, the yards of quilting completed, or for a specific job such as adding binding. Several women, called piecers, cut out all of the patterns and do the actual sewing. The marker gets the quilt top next, picks out and marks the actual quilting patterns. The third step in the process is to give the quilt to women who will put the quilt together and do the actual quilting. Finally a woman, known as the binder, finishes the edges of the quilt. Under this type of process everyone remains anonymous in accordance with their value to be humble, and yet at the same time, the women are earning additional income for their households. This assures that

Lolly's has a top notch inventory and the Amish and Mennonite women get paid for doing something they love.

QUILTS AS ART

Since stores such as *Lolly's* have turned quilts and wall hangings into pieces of art, there have been many other events that have helped to bolster the idea that quilts can indeed be accepted as art. Art dealers actually started purchasing quilts as an art commodity. The biggest change occurred in the early 1970s when Doug Tompkins, co-founder of the Esprit Corporation in San Francisco, purchased a building with massive brick walls but no art work. Tompkins traveled to New York where he saw his first Amish quilt, an antique, and was awestruck by the strong graphic design. Tompkins purchased the quilt for wall art, and over the next few years he purchased almost ninety more Amish quilts for his wall collection (Hughes 1993: 204). Throughout the years Tompkins has shared his collection with the Museum of Fine Arts in San Francisco, culminating with a major exhibition of the quilts in 1990 (Hughes 1993: 5).

The Whitney Museum of Art in New York City presented an exhibition, *Abstract Designs in American Quilts*, in 1971 that also raised awareness that quilts could and should be considered as art pieces. This presentation of quilts received much media attention because for the first time a world renowned museum displayed quilts as pieces of fine art. Not only were the quilts on display at the prestigious Whitney but after the event ended, the quilts were taken on tour all over the world (Ramsey 1994:11). It is possible that if Jonathan Holstein and Gail van der Hoof had not curated the Whitney show, quilts and, specifically, abstract-looking quilts would still not be recognized as high art.

Additionally, many quilts have been appreciated for their visual appeal as they have been compared to contemporary geometric abstract paintings (Warren 1987: 514-15). Amish quilts and other abstract quilts are much sought after by individuals who admire folk art as well as contemporary fine art (Warren 1987:515; Cadogan 2005). Following the Whitney exhibition, American quilts also have become valued for the historical information that they provide about the lives of women.

The recognition of quilts as high art, in the past thirty or forty years, has been a wonderful occurrence, especially for women who have turned to quilt making as a way to earn a living. However, traditionally quilts were not made as fine art but as an art or craft that many women pursued for personal reasons. For many, quilts became a matter of survival. Coverings had to be made to keep a family warm on cold, winter nights. Quiltmaking was also a way that many women could express themselves artistically. One farm women in the 1800s stated "I would have lost my mind if I had not my quilts to do" (Mainardi 1982; 335).

Originally, quilting was considered low or folk art because it was seen as women's work, was done as a hobby in spare time, and its products, quilts, were utilitarian items for the home. It also was believed that many quilts were group projects, thus they were devalued as art. It is true that some special quilts, such as bridal quilts, were meant to be group projects, but the majority of quilts were designed and constructed by one person and, in many instances, a person who remained unnamed (Mainardi 1982; 332).

No discussion of art and quilts would be complete without a discussion of the quilts made in Gee's Bend, Alabama, which will make it clear that quilts can be

considered a craft and high art at the same time. The Gee's Bend community was established in the 1800s by Joseph Gee, owner of a large plantation at the bend in the Alabama River. Many slaves worked the plantation which raised indigo, cotton, and peanuts (Wallach 2006:69; Levin 2003). In 1845 the property was turned over to Mark H. Pettway for money owed to him. Many of the slaves who worked the plantation were given the last name Pettway. Today there are still many African Americans in the community of 700 with the last name of Pettway (Callahan 1987:34). After slavery ended, many of the former slaves continued working on the plantation as tenant farmers (Arnett 2002:5).

Although this was one of the poorest regions in the country, the women who called Gee's Bend home continued the tradition of quilting that they had been taught by their mothers and grandmothers. Richard Kalina states that the women shared a sense of esthetic lineage with patterns and ways of quilting that were handed down through extended families and known to the rest of the community (2003:105). The quilts made in Gee's Bend were originally made so that poor families would have covers to keep them warm (Kalina 2003:108). The Gee's Bend quilts use the same geometric shapes that are found in traditional Amish quilts. The quilts of Gee's Bend were made with whatever fabrics were on hand and thus include corduroy, polyester leisure suits, old overalls, tobacco pouches, rags and even fertilizer sacks (Matchan 2005:2; Kalina 2003).

Although the quilts, in many instances, were crudely made, they have a deep appeal to art collectors. Art collector and researcher William Arnett first saw a picture of a Gee's Bend quilt in a 1996 book. He was so enthralled that he started on a search for the maker of the quilt and once he found her, he found many more quilts and the women

who made them buried away in the small hamlet. When he saw the quilts, he made arrangements for them to be displayed at the Whitney, and this opened up a whole new world for the quilters. Arnett states that the minimalist composition of Gee's Bend quilts has been compared to both Amish quilts and 20th century painters such as Henry Matisse (2002:4). The quilts have since been shown at various art museums such as the Milwaukee Art Museum, the High Museum of Art in Atlanta, and the Philadelphia Museum of Art (Levin 2003:22). All of this publicity has led to the formation of the Gee's Bend Quilters collective, which consists of fifty quilters that are in the business of making and marketing their quilts. Their quilts sell for an average price of \$3,000.

As I think about what has taken place in the past thirty or forty years to bring quilts into the art arena, no single person or event can be credited with causing the change. The collective efforts of art collectors, art museums and even people and businesses that have marketed quilts have drawn attention to quilts as pieces of art. When I consider my own background in learning to sew and quilt, my learning process also represents a collective experience, shaped as they were by people and circumstances that allowed me to be able to design and make quilts.

MY BACKGROUND

As a young child I spent much time with my paternal grandmother, who sewed all her own clothes. Thus, from the time I was very young, I was exposed to fabric. By the time I was eight or nine years old, I would be taken by my grandfather to the store to pick out fabrics for my grandma's aprons and cotton house dresses. Once in the fabric department, I would love picking out floral prints along with paisleys, polka dots, and plaid dry goods. I would be given little pieces from these materials to sew together with

needle and thread, thus beginning my sewing lessons. These first sewing ventures created very coarse coverings for my dolls. By the time I was ten or eleven I was learning to use an old Singer treadle sewing machine.

In the early 1960s, when I was in junior high school, the educational curriculum required that all girls take a basic sewing class. Each girl was required to have a sewing basket with tools (mine was a round white wicker basket), and, we also had to pick out material for a simple apron. To this day I can still see the cream fabric with little pink rosebuds that I chose. By high school I was making a pleated skirt and a blue wool two-piece suit. The modern Singer electric sewing machine purchased for my mother became mine.

In my early thirties, I decided I wanted to learn a new skill that would allow me to work with the cotton fabrics which I had grown to love and that reminded me of happy times spent with my grandma. With the inspiration of several quilting magazines I had purchased, I decided to take a beginning quilting class at a small shop. One class is all it took to get me hooked. Throughout the series of classes I learned many valuable lessons such as picking out a quilt pattern, purchasing the right fabrics, putting the pattern together, and finally learning to do the quilting stitch. My first project, started during the class, was a pieced Log Cabin quilt in primary colors. That quilt taught me many valuable skills that I have carried with me throughout the years. Since that first quilt was completed, I have made many baby quilts, special quilts for my grandsons, and, additionally, several larger quilts. My favorite quilt to make, and one I still own, is an appliquéd Tulip quilt done in Amish colors.

Quilt registries in Indiana and many other states were formed beginning in 1987 to encourage individuals who quilted or who owned family quilts to register them. As the quilts were photographed a history was taken of each quilt. This history included information such as the name of the maker(s) (if known), fabrics used, where the quilt was made, and any other pertinent information. When I heard that the Indiana Quilt Registry was going to spend May 21, 1988 on the Indiana University South Bend campus I volunteered to help with the event. Over a seven hour period, dozens of quilts were photographed and registered. Some quilts were newly made (such as my Double Irish Chain) while many of the other quilts were pulled off beds, out of attics or old trunks to be registered. Each of the quilts had its own story to tell about its maker and their family setting (farm or city, finances, and other information). It was a phenomenal experience to have dozens of quilts in one place, and additionally, to have the opportunity to touch and view each quilt up close. As I worked at this event, not only was I inspired by the quilts themselves but by the amount of history that was being preserved in both pictures and writing. The group took great pains to safeguard the growth and change of quilt making in the country and also the culture in which the quilt was produced. By the end of the day, 385 quilts were documented at the South Bend registry (Indiana Quilt Registry 1991; 166).

MY QUILT DESIGN PROCESS

Once I decided to make an Amish style quilt many questions came into play such as what pattern to use, colors to include, quilt size, borders, and quilting patterns. When choosing the pattern that I wanted to use, I was inspired by the Amish in whose communities I have spent time. Since I wanted my quilt to be representative of a quilt made in our neighboring Indiana Amish locales, I chose to make a traditional Nine-Patch.

The Nine-Patch along with Shooflys, Bow Ties and Baskets are among the most popular Indiana Amish patterns (Granick 1989:123). The Nine-Patch pattern is one of those patterns that the Amish picked up from their German neighbors in Pennsylvania (Granick 1989: 18). The simplicity of the Nine-Patch, a square divided into nine equal squares, is a pattern that can be played with in many ways. They can sit next to each other as in my quilt, or they can be used vertically or horizontally to form other patterns (Jefferson 1998: 48; Bishop 1996; Havig 1992; Lawson 1982; Pottinger 1983).

Once I chose my pattern I drew a design out on paper that included the center of the quilt and the borders that I wanted to use. As I drew out the basic plans, I kept in mind the size of quilt that I wanted: one to fit on a queen-sized bed. I had to design my individual squares, whole center, and borders with that in mind. The center area was designed for the six-inch finished nine-patch blocks to be placed nine across and ten down (comprising 90 blocks total) and creating a center area that was fifty-four inches by sixty inches. Each nine-patch block consisted of nine squares measuring $2\frac{1}{2}$ inches each. I wanted to include nine-patch blocks in my border so my original sketch included a six-inch border that was made up of six-inch nine-patch blocks. The first solid border, closest to the center, was designed to finish two inches wide, followed by a solid border to finish four inches wide, then the six-inch nine-patch border and finally a six-inch solid border. However, the third border did not work properly; measurements were off so it did not fit. Thus I designed a new border made with rectangles. The pattern is called Bars and was used frequently in Amish quilting. The rectangles are sewn together along their long edges to create the border. Nine-patches did eventually show up at the corners of the final solid-colored border.

Once the design was drawn, it was time to pick out colors to use. Since I wanted to use many colors, each nine-patch block was an Amish color (five squares) plus black (four squares, forming a T-shape). The Amish colors are any of the colors on the “cool” side of the color wheel plus deep reds, and pinks. Most Amish communities also now allow yellows, oranges and golds, which previously were not used. In keeping with this, I included these colors in my quilt as well. I had a wicker basket full of plain Amish-colored cotton fabrics, so I chose to start there. By using what I had on hand, I followed in the footsteps of Indiana Amish women who did the same. Out of my wicker basket came the pieces, some large enough for several blocks, others so small that only one nine-patch block could be cut from them. Each nine-patch block requires five two and a half inch colored squares to be cut. Black was used as the contrasting color in four squares of each nine-patch block. I chose to use black because it gives other colors a neon effect; it gives intensity and brings out pinks, lavenders, blues, and greens (Lawson 1982: 8). For each nine-patch square, four two and a half inch squares of black were cut. All together 510 colored squares were cut along with 408 black squares. These squares were all cut individually with scissors. I used scissors so that I could take my work with me wherever I was going. This number does not include the nine-patch blocks used in the corners. The ninety blocks for the center of the quilt were sewn together using a New Home electric sewing machine, as was the rest of the quilt. Each block was sewn individually rather than with the strip piecing method. While Amish women do not have the option of using an electric sewing machine, most of the Amish households own a treadle style sewing machine. The treadle machine is the same type that my grandmother used and on which I learned to sew.

Once the actual sewing of the squares was completed the individual nine-patches were laid out on the floor and I moved them around until I had an aesthetically pleasing arrangement for the center. At this point, I started sewing the blocks together to create rows. Once all of the blocks were sewn together in this manner, the individual rows were sewn together to form the entire center unit.

Next I started working with the borders. My first border was deep green and was cut two and a half inches wide so that with the $\frac{1}{4}$ inch seam allowance, it would be two inches when finished. The second border, cut four and a half inches wide to finish at four inches, was a strong red and was the only fabric that I intentionally purchased for this quilt. At this juncture I sewed the green and red borders together and placed a nine-patch block (in random colors) at each corner.

After adding these borders to the center design I was ready to tackle my third border. This border changed from my original plans of nine-patches to rectangles that measured two inches by six inches finished size. Each of the different colored rectangles was cut individually from fabrics that were left over from making my nine-patches. At the end of each row of rectangles I placed a nine-patch block (in random colors), thus continuing the nine-patches out toward the edge at the four corners. My final border finished at six inches wide and was made in a deep purple. I chose this final color for two reasons: I had a large piece of deep purple in my collection and it is my favorite color. Purple also is a perfectly acceptable color that Amish women can use. In contrast to some other Amish communities, strong red was specifically used in Elkhart and LaGrange Amish communities for quilt making. This red, however, would never be permissible for clothing (Granick 1989: 128).

Once the quilt top was completed, I had to choose a batting and the backing. For the batting I chose to use a polyester blend. I chose this blend because I wanted the quilting to look fairly flat but wanted to have the ease of polyester. Some polyester batting is very thick and gives the quilt a puffy appearance, which I did not want. Purchasing a batting with a blend gave the quilt top more the look I desired. Amish women would also buy batting that would fit their needs. Depending on the look they are going for they would use cotton, polyester, or a combination batting.

The backing of the quilt is cut in three rectangular sections and is made from the deep green and purple fabric that is in the quilt top. Since I had a large supply of these two materials, I cut two backing pieces of deep green and one of deep purple. The deep purple section was placed in the center with deep green pieces seamed on either side. By making my backing in this manner, I was again using what I had on hand.

Once I reached the point of laying out the whole quilt, I took all three layers to a friend's house where I had more space to lay out the top, batting and backing. Once the quilt was completely layered together, I basted the entire quilt together (without pinning) to hold the three layers together so it could be placed on my Dritz compact PVC pipe quilt frame (28 inches by 39 inches), which I used in lieu of a hoop. This frame was a new purchase and I was not sure how it would work but it worked very well.

Additionally, it held the quilt in place very well as I did my actual quilting. From the information that I have been able to gather most Amish women use a large traditional wooden frame because they can accommodate them in their homes and more than one woman may quilt at a time so they need the larger frame. The PVC frames would not be forbidden.

In choosing the actual quilting patterns, I wanted to quilt-in-the-ditch around the squares and rectangles that unexpectedly developed in the center of the quilt. Quilting-in-the-ditch, which the Amish use, refers to a method of quilting where one stitches right along seam lines. On my particular quilt the colored squares are individually quilted in-the-ditch while the black rectangles that formed are quilted-in-the-ditch as one unit (8-10 stitches per inch).

For my borders I wanted to use quilting designs that were indicative of Amish-made quilts. Two of the patterns that I chose came out of the book Quilting Designs from the Amish by Pepper Cory. There is an interesting story behind how this collection of patterns came to be. In her travels through Amish country, specifically Indiana, Cory met Rebecca Haarer, who is a well known Mennonite quilter and antique dealer in Shipshewana. Haarer, an avid pattern collector, had attended Amish auctions around the Shipshewana area where she would purchase boxes of patterns. Haarer encouraged Cory to look through the boxes which contained many old quilting patterns, a number of which were drawn or cut out of newspapers. The oldest patterns were from 1898 and the most modern one was from the 1960s. The idea that someone needed to record the patterns came from a simple thought by Cory. Haarer introduced Cory to other quilt makers and the collection of patterns recorded in the book was born (Cory 1985; 3).

The heart pattern that I used for the narrow green border came from Cory's book. I stitched single hearts that filled the border, with each heart touching the next. This particular quilt pattern came from an Amish quilter in Lancaster, Pennsylvania and is used frequently by Amish quilt makers. The four inch red border is quilted in a design called Floral Border (Pellman 1984; 125), which is closely related to a feather design (see

photos in the Appendix for details on the quilting patterns mentioned here). Feather designs are one of the most common quilting patterns used in Amish quilt making. The six inch multicolored rectangle border is quilted in a decorative design that appears in Cory's book. The pattern, called Amish Twist, appeared in several sizes, and was drawn on brown paper in the auction boxes with the notation "Mrs Andrew Esch" written on the pattern (Cory 1985: 3). I used the small pattern but enlarged it on a zerox machine to get a size that would work for my border. Finally the outside purple border was quilted in channel or straight line quilting (using masking tape as a guide) and in clamshell quilting (also known as half rounds). The clamshell quilting was done starting at the middle of the border and then spacing it out every few inches; channel quilting filled in the rest of the space. Clamshell quilting provides good texture when used on a quilt (Lawson 1982; 103).

The quilting thread that I used was different from traditional Amish quilts, which generally have a solid black thread or a color that matches the backing (Havig 1992; 134). I used a new variegated quilting thread called Plumberry (light blue to deep berry), which I found only in a machine quilting variety. Since I quilt everything by hand as the Amish do, I was not certain how the thread would work. I found that as I hand quilted there were things that I liked about the variegated thread and one thing that I disliked. As the thread subtly changed color across the surface of the quilt top, I liked the way that in places it became very visible but in other places was very subtle. On the red border and multicolored rectangles, the quilting stitches are very visible, however, on the dark green, purple and black sections; they almost completely disappear into the background. Had I chosen to use a different color variegated thread the results might have been completely

different. I personally liked the delicate changes that developed. One problem that I found as I used the variegated thread was that it shredded and broke more frequently than traditional quilting thread. I solved this by shortening up my pieces of thread. The only reason that I can think why this happened is that this variegated thread is usually used for machine quilting; therefore, it would not get the pull or wear on it that it would with hand quilting. Although I had this problem occasionally, I would not hesitate to use this thread again.

The final step in the quilt making process was adding the red binding to finish off the edges of the quilt. I chose to make the binding red to add a little spark of color to the edge of the quilt. The binding fabric was cut four inches wide so that when folded in half it would finish at about two inches. When it was sewn onto the edge of the quilt back by machine, it would then fold to the front of the quilt to finish closer to half an inch wide. I was taught to stitch the binding onto a quilt from back to front; at times, I embroider along the front edge as well. Once folded to the front, it was hand sewn to the quilt top. Once the binding was completed, I signed my quilt, although an Amish woman would never do this.

CONCLUSION

As I come to the end of my project, it is important to reflect on what I have learned from the whole process and what I found to be exciting about the whole learning curve of completing the project. My main goal, as I started the project, was to make an Amish folk quilt for myself. As I moved into the project, I realized that if my quilt could also be seen as worth purchasing to hang on a wall as high art, this would please me. The first step in the whole process was to do research on Amish quilts in different areas.

Since different Amish communities use different patterns, colors, and so on in their quilts, it was imperative for me to study the different regions and then decide on a pattern that would be reflective of an Indiana Amish setting.

Additionally, although I could have stopped the research with just Amish quilts, it was important for me to spend time reflecting on Amish women and culture. Personally, I did not feel that I could complete the project without background knowledge about the lives of Amish women and the culture in which they produce their stunning quilts. Obviously, due to this culture, the women will produce their quilts much differently than I did mine. For example, I had an electric sewing machine to use, while the Amish women use the old-fashioned treadle machine. Many Amish women in certain districts have color or pattern restrictions placed on them, which I did not have.

Without taking time to explore Amish culture, I would not have learned that Amish culture is not static but is ever-changing. For instance, forty years ago Amish women made only solid colored Amish quilts for the use of their own families. With the economic situation changing in Amish communities, as it has in our own, and, additionally, with a large influx of tourists into Amish districts, Amish women now make many quilts using fabrics that tourists want. The Amish women have been able to make this adjustment with the approval of their church bishops. This creates a win-win situation for everyone. The tourists get quilts that they want and as a result of these sales, the Amish women receive additional incomes for their families.

Although Amish women would not seek to have their quilts recognized as high art, to be displayed on a wall, I would hope that my Amish style quilt would be accepted as more than a bed covering for cold winter nights. Over the past forty years or so many

art historians, antique dealers and others with a strong interest in art have begun to recognize quilts as a high art form. Doug Tompkins, a co-owner of Esprit, bought over ninety Amish quilts to decorate his San Francisco headquarters. Quilts have been displayed in the Whitney Museum of Fine Arts, which was unheard of until the early 1970s. In addition, individuals such as William Arnett have brought quilts to the forefront of art by arranging exhibits and displays of quilts, such as those from Gee's Bend, Alabama. The Gee's Bend quilts have been displayed in many fine art museums around the country.

I chose to make an Amish style quilt for my final project because I wanted to make something artistic with fiber, and making a quilt was my way to accomplish this goal. Additionally, to complete the quilt I needed to spend much time in interdisciplinary studies in areas such as History and Anthropology. Without readings in areas such as Amish history, women's studies, and Amish culture and religion I might have been able to execute the making of an Amish style quilt. However, I would not have gained an overall appreciation for and knowledge about Amish life and culture which was important to me. The scholarship that I gained about the Amish will be with me for a lifetime, as will my quilt.

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This is the wicker basket filled with Amish materials that was the inspiration for many of the patterns used
for the Nine-Patch quilt.

Here are a few completed nine patch quilt squares.

Appendix

From Start to Finish: The Amish Nine-Patch Quilt



This is the wicker basket filled with Amish materials that was the inspiration for many of the materials used for the Nine-Patch quilt.



Here are a few completed nine-patch quilt squares.



This picture shows the middle of the Nine-Patch quilt without the borders. The blues, lavenders, and other colors “pop” against the black background.



Pictured here is the center of the quilt with a couple of the quilt books that provided much information about Amish quilt making.



Here the whole quilt is pictured. The newly added borders shown are a narrow deep green, a sparkling red, the multicolored rectangular border, and the six inch wide purple border. The narrower borders are typical of Amish quilts in Ohio and Indiana.



More detail of the borders and the corners where nine-patches flow to the corners of the quilt. In this picture the rectangular border is seen very clearly.

The finished quilt showing the Amish colors used and the black rectangles that developed in the middle of the quilt.



The nine-patches have spilled out of the center of the quilt and flowed over to the edges of the quilt in the borders. Borders usually keep Amish quilts controlled just as the church Ordnung keeps the Amish people in control. However, in this case, the nine-patches have become a little unruly.



The finished quilt showing the Amish colors used and the black rectangles that developed in the middle of the quilt.



This picture shows examples of the hand quilting that was done on the quilt. The green border was quilted in hearts. The red border has a feather design. The multi-colored rectangular border shows the Amish Twist pattern and finally the fourth purple border shows straight line quilting.



This picture shows the red binding on the quilt that adds a spark of color to the outside edge of the quilt. Additionally, the backing with the two colors, deep green and purple, is showing.

VITA

I was born in South Bend, Indiana in 1949 and I have always resided within twenty miles of my birthplace. I received my childhood education through the South Bend Community School Corporation and the Penn School Corporation. After my two daughters were born, I decided that it was time to go back to school and pursue a bachelors degree, which I received in 2002 from Indiana University South Bend. At this point in my life, it seemed the natural thing to do to continue the educational process to obtain my Masters. Over the years I have spent much time working in addition to attending college and raising a family. I have worked for a trucking company, for a school corporation as an elementary school secretary, and, now, in higher education at Indiana University. My hobbies include quilt making, reading and cooking.